

July 1, 2008

Secretary A.G. Kawamura
California Department of Food and Agriculture
1220 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: CDFA Listening Session

Dear Secretary Kawamura:

Representing the San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau I would like to thank you for this opportunity to give input into the Vision for California Agriculture 2030. As the number 1 agricultural state in the U.S., it is extremely important that we keep our industry strong.

I would like to briefly address a few points that we consider the most critical as we move toward the year 2030.

You Asked:

What is your vision for California agriculture by 2030? As a broad based agricultural organization, Farm Bureau believes that for a sustainable agricultural industry there must be diversity throughout the industry on many levels. Without this, agriculture will not thrive.

We see 2030 as a time when California has achieved a system:

1. Where regulation and regulatory compliance does not overly burden either the small farmer or large producers.

Government regulations need to be re-evaluated to determine the true reason and purpose for the regulation, the effectiveness of the regulation and the cost of the regulation. Sustainable agriculture not only includes the environmental health of the industry and community, but the economic health as well. Government regulation of California's agricultural producers is spiraling out of control seriously impacting the small and medium size farmers. The cost of compliance is reaching a level that only the largest farmers can sustain the regulatory burden.

Regulation is placing California's farmers and ranchers at a critical competitive disadvantage with imported commodities. Many nations do not require the same practices and restriction that are imposed on our own producers to insure a safe and healthy commodity, such as phytosanitary and other health standards. If the health

standards are for public safety then imported commodities must meet the same standards. Consumers must not be placed at risk from consuming lesser quality imported commodities.

2. Where farmers have a secure, stable and reliable source of workers;

California's policies must support a reliable seasonal workforce. It is critical for the future of agriculture in our state. Unlike the claims of some, it is not possible to harvest certain fruits (such as strawberries and all stone fruits) or vegetables (such as most lettuce and cabbage, as well as fresh tomatoes) by machine. Effective immigration reform is critical and needed immediately. This must be reform that not only protects the U.S. borders, but allows people to legally work through a guest worker program.

3. Where there is room for both the small farmer and the large producers to be successful;

CDFA must recognize and support the benefits of both the large and small agricultural producers. The type of agriculture undertaken is based upon a wide range of conditions such as geography, economics, proximity to the intended market and the philosophy of the producer. A small farm might succeed where a large operation will not. Conversely, large operations are necessary for certain types of agriculture that would be beyond the means of the small farmer.

4. Where organic, traditional and new technology farming (including genetic engineering) work together to produce the best possible food and fiber;

There is a place in our agricultural world for all types of agriculture and this diversity must be protected. Many on the Central Coast today enjoy locally grown, organic fruits and vegetables. But, not all people have access to organic produce and conventional farming provides cost effective, quality fruits and vegetables. As technology expands, there will be new crop varieties and uses that are sustainable and provide benefits worldwide. We must not eliminate one system of farming for exclusivity of another, all have a place in the feeding, clothing and protecting the world.

5. Where invasive pests are successfully prevented from entering California;

While we recognize that consumers may enjoy imported fruits and vegetables in California's off-season, California must be vigilant in protecting our state's agriculture from the introduction of foreign pests. As part of this effort, there must be public education relating to risks of pests and the safety of the measures that our government undertakes to control or eradicate such pests as the Light Brown Apple Moth. Neither California's agriculture nor the consumers can afford the loss of our agricultural productivity from a foreign pest invasion.

6. Where there is sufficient water supply for both agricultural and urban uses through conservation and increased storage capacity;

Water is the life blood of agriculture and consumers alike. Water conservation by all users is necessary. We are proud to be able to say that our state's farmers and

ranchers have increased production while at the same time significantly decreasing their of water consumption. Our government needs to support new technology developing even more efficient irrigation systems, as well as the development of new crop varieties that demand less water. Government also needs to continue to educate the public as to the finite nature of water and how to best conserve this precious resource for an ever growing population.

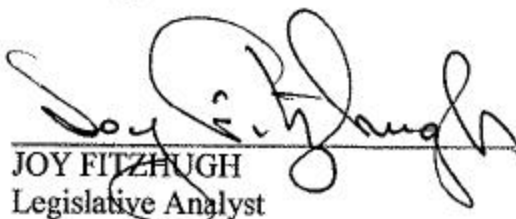
7. Where the food system supports both the global and local production and distribution of food:

Both the global and local markets must continue to be priority. Some commodities, such as cotton and rice, must be grown with the world market in mind. Conversely, Farmer's Markets are an excellent means of bringing to local farmer and consumer together for in-season fresh produce. Unfortunately, not all consumers, even in California, have the privilege of being near local food sources, while in the agricultural areas there are not enough consumers to utilize all the locally produced food crops. To focus agriculture on only locally grown agricultural commodities ignores the world's reality. The global market allows the consumer to enjoy produce that would otherwise be unavailable, while creating a buffer against crop failure in another part of the country or world.

And last, but really most important:

California agriculture is the best in the world. We hope that this can be said in the year 2030. Thank you again for this opportunity to speak before you today.

Sincerely,



JOY FITZHUGH
Legislative Analyst